

13 SILK-WORMS:
A
P O E M.
I N
T W O B O O K S.

*Written originally in Latin, by MARG.
HIER. VIDA, Bishop of Alba.*

And now Translated into English.

*With a PREFACE, giving an Ac-
count of the LIFE and WRITINGS of VIDA.*

*Immortal VIDA, on whose honour'd Brow,
The Poet's Bays and Critick's Ivy grow;
Cremona now shall ever boast thy Name,
As next in Place to Mantua, next in Fame.*
Mr. POPE.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. PEELE, at *Locke's Head* in
Pater noster-Row. MDCCXXIII,

(Price One Shilling.)

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A
POEM
IN
TWO BOOKS

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Translated by J. D. ...
The Poet's Biography ...
Citations ...
At next in ...
Mr. Pope.

LONDON:
Printed for J. D. ...
Pat. nro. Reg. MDCCLXIII.
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Prefatory LETTER

TO
FRIEND.

S I R,

THE inclosed is a Translation of that celebrated Poem of VIDA's, on SILK-WORMS; I send it for your Perusal, because I know you to be so much an Admirer of the Author, as to like him even in the Undress of an *English* Version. I shall say nothing in Justification of my Undertaking; tho' perhaps a good deal might be said to extenuate those gross Faults which a Person of your

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Discernment must find in it. I entirely submit my self to your Censure for my Presumption in translating your favourite Author; but hope to be judg'd with your usual Candour, when you consider that I labour under a Difficulty unknown to most of our modern Translators. There are now-a-days so many Versions of almost every good Author, that it is scarcely necessary to understand the Language a Poet wrote in, in order to make a new *English* Translation. These are Helps I wanted: I ventured upon an Original, untranslated before, and, for any thing that I knew, uncommented upon; so that if I have miscarried, I at least deserve some Pity, and *Magnis tamen excidit Ausis*, should be my Motto.

I have only this Favour to beg of you, that in perusing these Lines, you will consider them neither as Paraphrase, nor Metaphrase, but something between both; in Pursuance of this Rule of my Lord Roscommon's, from which I have hardly swerved:

*The genuine Sense intelligibly told,
Makes a Translator both discreet and bold.*

I re-

to a FRIEND.

I remember the last Time I was in your Company, you seem'd anxious that the World knew so little of the Life and Writings of our Author; that even Men of Letters and Curiosity were almost utter Strangers to them. To remedy this Misfortune, I have collected the following Abstract of his Life, for which I own my self chiefly indebted to the *Oxford* Editor of his Works, and which, with your Leave and Approbation, I will print, if ever these Sheets are made publick; since nothing that I can say on the Translation will be so just an Entertainment to you, or so good a Preface to the World.

Marcus Hieronymus Vida was a Native of *Cremona*; his Parents were *Gelelmus Vida*, and *Leona Oscafala*, in Wealth unequal to their Family, of which the Fortune (but how we can't learn) had been much wasted: However, they took such Care of his Education, as might prevent his stooping to Business beneath the Dignity of his Birth. To this End, after he had receiv'd a good Share of School-Learning, and made a Progress in Philosophy at *Mantua* and *Cremona*, he was sent to *Padua*, where, and at *Bononia*, he applied himself to the Studies of Divinity and Poetry: But

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how long he staid there, or when he returned to *Cremona*, is not certain; only this we know, that he could not have spent much Time at home, for that he very early enter'd into the *Augustinian* House of the Canons Regular of *St. Mark* at *Mantua*; and after, whilst yet a Youth, being called to the Society of the Canons Regular of *St. John Lateran*, took his last Leave of his Parents, and went to *Rome*: Here his Reputation soon reach'd the Ears of Pope *Leo X.* whose singular Fondness for Men of Parts and Learning, led him into a Friendship with our Author; the Effect of which was, that from the Retirement of a Monastery he was called to Court, placed near the supreme Pontiff, and by him highly honoured, and generously rewarded.

Tho' *Vida's* Wit was hitherto only employ'd upon light and trivial Subjects, yet was it, in the Opinion of all Judges, equal to the greatest; infomuch that the Pope, being desirous to see the Christian Religion celebrated by some Poet, whose Works would do it no Dishonour, made choice of him, and encourag'd him to undertake the *Christiad*: Altho', thro' his natural Modesty, he thought himself much inferior

to a FRIEND.

inferior to the Task ; yet, in Obedience to the Pope's Command, he enter'd upon that great and dangerous Undertaking, (as he himself calls it ;) which, the better to enable him to perform, *Leo* bestowed on him the Priory of *St. Sylvester* at *Tusculum*, where he retired from the Noise and Hurry of the Court, that he might at more Ease indulge himself in the Society of the Muses.

And now he seemed to have arrived at the highest Pitch of Happiness, in the Enjoyment of that State of Life which he most desired ; when on a sudden he was shock'd with the Death of both his Parents, almost at the same Time. This severe Affliction was soon follow'd by the Death of *Leo X.* and with him all his Encouragement and Hopes seem'd to vanish ; yet were again revived about two Years after, when upon the Death of *Adrian VI.* *Clement VIII.* was raised to the Papacy : He having a long Knowledge of our Author, from their studying together, laid his Commands on him to finish the *Christiad* ; which when he had performed, he rewarded him for it with the Bishoprick of *Alba*, in the Marquisate of *Montferrat*, then vacant by the Death of *Antonius Molus*.

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After the Acquisition of this Dignity, he staid not long at *Rome*, as is customary with some, either through Sloth or Ambition, but retir'd to his Diocese, where he behav'd himself like a true Christian Pastor, promoting the Glory of God, and Good of his Flock; insomuch that he not only obtain'd among the People of *Alba* the Character of an excellent Prelate, but of a loving Father. One great Instance of his Piety is, that when *Alba* was besieged by the *French*, besides continually exhorting the People not to give up the Town, he fed at his own Expence the greatest Part of them, who must otherwise have perished by Famine. In this Manner he govern'd his Diocese above five and thirty Years, until his Death, which happen'd on the 27th of *September*, 1566. after he had liv'd more than ninety. His Body was, with great Pomp and Solemnity, buried in the Cathedral of *Alba*; and soon after the Citizens of *Cremona* erected a magnificent Monument to his Memory in the greatest Church of their City, on which was engrav'd the following Epitaph:

D. O. M.

to a FRIEND.

D. O. M.

Marc. Hier. Vidæ Albæ Episcopo,

Quem probe omnes norunt,

Civitas Cremona, decreto Sepulchro sumptu

Pub. Civi.

Qui de universa Civitate B. M. est,

Parentavit.

V. A. N.

Qui, cum quicquid in egregium Hominem,

Laudis dici potest,

In eum beneficio nat. fuerit. collatum,

Immortalitate erat dignus.

Nisi naturæ communis conditio obstitisset.

Vivit tamen adhuc apud Nos,

Vivitque Æternum ad Posteror Benef.

Fucundiss.

Ac perpetua recordatione.

Qui omnibus erga gregem sibi commissum

Officiis functus,

Pietat. Charit. Fide, Const. præclarus,

Omnibus Charus,

Nemini Noxius, a nobis discessit,

Suo magis quam aliorum

Tempore.

Qui non solum pie & sancte Deum coluit,

Sed ita etiam cecinit ut in Cælo locum,

Ubi Beatus,

Ævo

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*Ævo sempiterno fruatur,
Et in Terris Æternam sibi Gloriam,
Maximo omnium mortalium fructu*

Compararit.

Obiit Anno MDLXVI.

XXVII. Septemb.

Such Poems as *Vida* wrote and own'd,
were by him in his Life-time collected in
two Volumes, and curiously printed at *Cre-
mona*, A.D. MDL. The first contain'd Hymns
on divine Subjects, and the *Christiad*, in six
Books; the second, three Books of the *Art
of Poetry*, two of *Silk-Worms*, one of *Chefs*,
three *Eclogues*, and *Poems of several Kinds*.
Besides these, are attributed by some to *Vida*,
three poetical Pieces, entituled, *Carmen Pa-
storale in Obitum Jul. 2. Pont. Maxim*; *Trede-
cim Italorum Pugilum cum totidem Gallis Certamen*,
and *Epicedion in funere Oliverii Cardi-
nalis Caraphæ*; but we have his own Word
that they were not his. His Prose Works
consist of three Dialogues on the Dignity of
the Common-Wealth, printed at *Cremona*,
1556; one Book of the Constitution of Sy-
nods, printed there likewise in the Year 1562,
and an Epistle to *Bartholomeus Botta*, prefix'd
to his Comment on the *Christiad*. There is
a Trea-

to a FRIEND.

a Treatise on Magistracy said to be written by him, which was never published that we can find, and is in all Probability lost. There is another Book ascribed to him, entituled, *Cremonensium Orationes tres contra Papienses in Controversia Principatus*; but this we have good Reason to believe spurious.

Thus, Sir, I have given you the Heads of a Life, which I dare not venture to write; but hope some abler Pen will do our Author that Justice, which is not in the Power of,

Yours, &c.

London, May 1.

1723.



TO A FRIEND.

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is another Book ascribed to him, entitled,
Orationes Quatuordecim contra Paganos
its Contents are Trifling; but this we have
Good Reason to believe spurious.

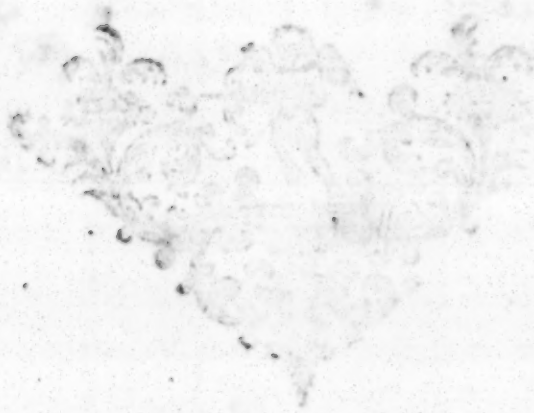
ERRATA.

Thus, Sir, I have given you the Heads of
PAg. 4. Lin. 4. for *Roef*, read *Root*. P. 17. in the Notes,
for *Vigenti*, r. *Rigenti*. P. 32. in the third Note, for
Armenia, r. *Media*. P. 24. l. 13. for *lightly*, r. *nightly*.
P. 24. l. 24. for *strain'd*, r. *stain'd*. P. 32. l. 24. for *lurk*,
r. *lurk'd*.

John, Esq.

London, May 1.

1723.



ER-



SILK-WORMS.

BOOK I.



WHAT curious Webs the well-fed
Worms enclose,
How from their Mouths the
glossy Matter flows;
What wondrous Arts adorn the
reptile Race,

Their Laws, their Labours, and their Lives to trace;
Assist ye (1) *Serian* Maids, your Artists own,
To you their Merits, and their Works are known,

(1) *Serian* Maids.] *Serius* is a River in Italy so small as
to be taken Notice of by none of our Geographers: Its Rise
and Course are described in the latter End of this Poem: Its
Water Nymphs, whom he calls *Seriades*, are frequently in-
voked by our Author in his Writings; it would seem to spring
near the Place of his Birth by this Line of his *Scacchiad*:

—Patrii canerem dum ad flumina Serii

B

Your

Your Sire to *Latian* Vales, and Nymphs untaught,
From *Indian* Coasts the mighty Blessing brought.

Fair (2) *Isabella*, whose fam'd Lineage springs
From a long Series of unnumber'd Kings;
Born for our Good, and by the Pow'rs Divine
Form'd for increasing the (3) *Gonzagan* Line;
Of Nature gen'rous, and of Manners mild,
The fairest Mother of the fairest Child;
Shed thy kind Influence on my lowly Lays,
And on the slender Subject smile thy Praise.

And all ye gentle Dames attend my Song,
To you the Matter and the Verse belong;
Hence learn th' Improvement of your lov'd Attire;
Yours is the Work, and you the Bard inspire.

This kind of Worm, for many Years unknown,
Dwelt in the Woods, and in the Woods alone;
In vain they toil'd and spun the silky Chain,
And Branches glisten'd with the Gold in vain;
For Show'rs defac'd, or Winds their Labours toss'd,
And all the Glory of the Work was lost.

Thus, in Time's Infancy, unpolish'd Man,
Rang'd o'er the Wilds, and thro' the Forests ran;
Nor House nor Town constrain'd the savage Kind,
Taught by no Precepts, by no Arts refin'd.

(2) *Isabella*, then *Dutchess* of *Mantua*.

(3) *Gonzagan*] *Gonzagez* is the *Sirname* of the *Dukes* of *Mantua*,

But when to wond'ring Mortals first was shewn
The precious Gift, and all its Uses known ;
Remov'd to Houses from the boist'rous Air,
The Worms they foster'd, and improv'd by Care.
From hence to some whole Tides of Riches flow,
And hoarded Gains to countless Treasures grow :
Altho' far distant hence a Nation lies,
In warmer Climes, and more indulgent Skies ;
Where, unconfin'd, the free-born Insect roves,
Feeds on the Trees, and wanders thro' the Groves ;
And works unbidden : Thro' the low'ring Sky
Show'rs harmless fall, and Winds innoxious fly.
For when the Flock condensing Clouds perceives,
Each lurks entrench'd beneath the shading Leaves :
Behind these Bulwarks, fortify'd they lie,
And all the Fury of the Storm defy ;
While heedless People all their Walks allow,
And cull the silken Webs from ev'ry Bough.

But be thou warn'd, nor suffer them to stray,
Nor thro' the Woods unheeded take their Way ;
House them secure, and in your Care be wise ;
Slight is the Labour, but not so the Prize,
Short is the Time, before the silken Spoil
Shall in full glitt'ring Heaps reward thy Toil.

Learn first their Date of Life : 'Tis finish'd soon,
Nor e'er exceeds the third revolving Moon ;
Childless they die, this dismal Fate all find,
And ev'ry Winter sees th' extinguish'd Kind.
Yet still the Name subsists ; a Brood succeeds,
Nor can Death triumph o'er th' eternal Seeds.

As in the Woods, when with'ring Boughs decay,
 By chilling Frost, or by the scorching Ray;
 While the lop'd Trunk supports Hyemal Fires,
 Down to the Roof the vital Sap retires:
 Thence when the genial Spring fresh Warmth applies,
 Shoots a new Plant, and sudden Branches rise.
 Thus when the Silk-Worms fail, a yearly Race
 Renews the Kind, and takes the Parents Place.

But, lest the Younglings come before their Time,
 And fall by Cold or Famine, by thy Crime;
 Bring not the hidden Seeds to Sight of Day,
 Whilst leafless Trees their naked Arms display;
 Till deck'd with Flow'rs, the smiling Meads are seen,
 And budding Mulberries are cloth'd with green:
 These Plants the Swains observe; and as they grow,
 The Times distinguish, and the Seasons know:
 When blooming Leaves their spreading Boughs adorn,
 And Blossoms open to the ruddy Morn;
 Joyous they learn the hoary Winter past,
 The frozen Waters, and the dreadful Blast;
 For Corn or Cattle they no longer fear,
 The boist'rous Dangers of th' inclement Year.

The changing Seasons of the Moon remain
 To be observ'd: Avoid the dang'rous Wane;
 Nor chuse the Time when she new dips her Horns,
 And paler Light her humid Face adorns:
 But when full orb'd, swol'n with her Brother's Blaze,
 She mounts the Skies, and dares to meet his Rays,
 Then bring them forth, then hatch the tender Breed,
 The waxing Light adds Vigour to the Seed;

The

SILK-WORMS.

5

The Moon propitious, and the fav'ring Sky,
With greater Strength the new-born Worm supply;

Next how to hatch them, and by what Device;
The Art is curious, and the Method nice.
Some to the warming Sun their Eggs display,
Till from their Cells the Younglings force their Way.
Be thou advis'd: Thy Bosom be their Nest,
Wrap'd close beneath thy Garment let them rest;
Nor needst thou blush beneath thy Breasts to hide,
If on their glossy Web thou build'st thy Pride.
E'er the third Sun the Gloom begins to clear,
New dawning Lives in wond'rous Forms appear.

But first of all propitious Heav'n adore,
And Saints, the Patrons of thy Works, implore;
While the Priest hallows at the sacred Shrine,
The Morning Sacrifice of Bread and Wine;
Thy earliest Gains upon their Altars place,
And with thy finest Webs their Temples grace:
Pleas'd with the Gifts, the Pow'rs thy Pray'rs attend,
From num'rous Ills the little Race defend;
From Colds and Heats protect the reptile Crew,
And all the Dangers which their Lives pursue.

Now Mansions for thy future Flocks prepare,
Each antient Lodge, and shatter'd Shelf repair:
Nor be the Seats for their Reception made,
Caves void of Light, or Houses wrap'd in Shade:
Two Windows opposite the Dome should grace,
Admit the Day, and dignify the Place;

One to the rising Sun, and op'ning East,
 The other obvious to the gloomy West.
 These line with Quarries of pellucid Glass,
 Or let firm Canvass guard th' important Pass;
 Lest hurtful Show'rs, or noxious Winds intrude,
 Or Colds, ingrateful to the tender Brood.
 Tho' some with earliest Care are wont to spread,
 O'er the wide Windows Nets of subtle Thread;
 Lest rav'nous Birds their tiny Flocks annoy,
 And with repeated Thefts their Hopes destroy.
 The Sparrow, fond of such luxurious Fare,
 And the coop'd Cock, escape the Keeper's Care;
 Thro' the wide Hall they stalk in lordly State,
 While Death and Slaughter on their Passage wait;
 And their fierce Beaks dispensing dreadful Dooms,
 The living Insects hide in living Tombs.

But they to whom large Flocks their Labours
 yield,
 Far from the damping Wall their Mansions build.
 Amid the Dome their Heads four Pillars rear,
 Which on each side suspended Tables bear;
 That fram'd with Art, a vary'd Scene compose,
 Where Seats o'er Seats arise in pendant Rows.
 And thou, lest various Plagues from thence should
 fall,
 Observe the Dangers of the mould'ring Wall;
 With Chalk or Lime the humid Parts repair,
 And guard each jarring Chink with strictest Care.
 Here oft the Mouse in secret Covert lies,
 And silent lurks while Day-light gilds the Skies;

But

But when the World in Darkneſs is involv'd,
And drowzy Keepers are in Sleep diſſolv'd,
His Cave, in queſt of Plunder, he forſakes,
Creeps up the Shelves, and horrid Slaughter makes:
Reeking with Gore, he mounts from Stage to Stage,
Fell are his Strokes, and dreadful is his Rage;
When fated, to his Cave he dares convey,
And feaſts at leiſure on the luſcious Prey:
For him cloſe Ambuſh lay, with Food allure,
And in ſurrounding Durance bind ſecure.
Unknowing let him ruſh upon his Fate,
When bold he bites the unſuſpected Bait.
With ſome, the Poſts on which the Shelves depend,
The Midnight Spoiler as he climbs offend;
While Thorns of Juniper are planted round,
And Nails and Spikes inflict a vary'd Wound.
Thus in the vain Attempt the Plund'rer dies,
At leaſt not bloodleſs bears away the Prize.

But to proceed: Scarce the third riſing Sun
The Gloom has vanquiſh'd, and his Courſe begun,
When, by thy Boſom warm'd, the fertile Seed,
Burſts into Life, and ſhows the teeming Breed;
New Forms they take, and from their Cells remove,
And round th' inwrapping Lawn begin to rove.
Yet from thy Boſom drive them not away,
Nor to their lofty Seats at firſt convey;
The new-born Flock but fills a narrow Space,
Yet ſoon grown large, requires a larger Place:
Then the whole Nation into Tribes divide,
And give them diff'rent Manſions to reſide.

This

This more than once, as often as you view,
 The Rooms too narrow for the growing Crew ;
 Nor cease dividing and removing still,
 'Till ev'ry Shelf, and ev'ry Lodge you fill.

Mean while neglect not with immediate Food,
 To cherish and support the new born Brood :
 With their first Breath they'll draw their Pastures in,
 At once their Hunger, and their Lives begin.
 Best will it be tho', for the thriving Breed,
 If a pure Maid, the tender Nurslings feed ;
 The budding Leaves of the (4) *Thisbean* Tree,
 Best suit their Tastes, and with their Youth agree ;
 Which conscious of their Kind, they quickly learn,
 Own the lov'd Food, and for the freshest yearn.
 For if one Night, thro' wretched Lust of Gain,
 Laid up in Stores the gather'd Leaves remain ;
 Their wholesome Use is by Corruption crost,
 Their Taste ungrateful, and their Flavour lost.
 Each Day then let thy Maids to Woods repair,
 And crop them fresh, while all the Labour share :
 Some pluck the Leaves, some bring them Home with
 speed,
 Some dress the Shelves, and some the Silk-Worms
 feed.
 Upon each Nest large Handfulls let them strow,
 The Younglings cov'ring as they lie below.
 Strait mount the Worms, and all the tender Brood
 With hungry Gust devour the luscious Food:

(4) *The Mulberry Tree, so called from Thisbe, who having killed her self under it, stained the Fruit, which was before White, into Red ; according to Ovid. See Met. Book 2.*

Such Noise is heard, as the clos'd Windows pour,
When hous'd, we hear from far, the falling Show'r:
Ceaseless they champ, and with voracious Haste,
While Food untouch'd prolongs the sweet Repast:
With equal Speed the Refuse is destroy'd,
And while a Leaf remains, they feed uncloy'd.

But take thou Care with mod'rate Hand to strow,
And only thrice each Day their Food bestow;
For if profuse you pour a boundless Store,
Give all at once, nor let them wish for more;
The lavish Plenty, to thy Hopes unjust,
Begets a Loathing, and creates Disgust.
Excite them slowly, let their Fears prevail,
To long for Forrage; lest their Stock should fail,
Throw in a single Leaf, and laugh to view,
The hungry Warfare of the tiny Crew;
All upwards rise, tumultuous force their Way,
And jar and struggle for the slender Prey.
Compell'd by Fasting, the whole reptile Breed
Is seiz'd at once with strong Desire to feed:
Then let their wonted Meals their Food endear,
Allay their Longings, and dispel their Fear.

Beware lest Famine on their Vitals prey,
While you too cautiously their Feasts delay:
For shou'd you stint their Forrage, or refuse
The wonted Comfort of their daily Dues;
A dire Disease invades the starving Worms,
And meagre Leanness all the Flock deforms.
Let not thy Leaves nor Labour then be spar'd,
But double Doles their former Fasts reward;

Scarce can a Day their pristine Form restore,
So fell is Hunger, and so strong its Power.

Of like Importance is the Change of Food,
And ever fatal to the reptile Brood.
Two Kinds of Mulberries the Grove adorn,
And both are for the Silk-Worm's Diet shorn :
In either he delights as Custom leads,
On each without Distinction fondly feeds ;
Whether the softer White his Breeding claims,
Or Black the Fav'rite of the *Latian* Dames.

Perhaps you'll ask, if all the Foliage fail,
(Forbid ye Pow'rs, such Mischiefs to prevail !)
And all the with'ring Mulberries be lost,
By Summer's Heat, or by the Winter's Frost ;
What Food you shall prepare, what Pasture find,
To stop the Ruin of th' industrious kind ?
With fervent Pray'rs implore th' indulgent Pow'rs,
That such Misfortunes never may be ours :
But if they should, the lusty Shepherd send,
Amidst the Woods, the lofty Elms t' ascend ;
High thro' the Branches let him climb, and crop,
The tender Foliage from the budding Top.
From Kindred Origin's these Plants proceed,
And Swains observe the Sympathetick Breed :
Hence Boughs of Mulberry the Trunk adorn,
While by Elm-Stocks th' inserted Graffs are born :
Hence Trees that heretofore infertile grew,
Now teem with Berries of each diff'rent Hue.

Others

Others there are who when their Young appear,
E'er budding Leaves proclaim the blooming Year;
Nettles and Brambles for their Food prepare,
Swelling with Moisture in the vernal Air.
Be kind, nor let thy Maids unarm'd expose,
Their naked Limbs to dangerous Toils like those;
Nor let the Virgin lovely in her Prime,
Ascend the Trees, or thro' the Branches climb,
Lest stroling Satyrs witness her Disgrace,
And glowing Blushes mark her modest Face:
Such Tasks reserving for the wither'd Crone,
Whose wrinkled Skin is labour'd into Stone.

To crop dry Forrage be thy greatest Care,
Nor from the dripping Trees thy Stock repair;
By gentle Dews impearl'd, or violent Rain,
For the least Moisture is the Silk-Worm's Bane.
Nor let the Woods be trac'd for new Supplies,
While silent Night sits brooding o'er the Skies.
But when the Morning Sun his Race renews,
The Shades disperse, and exhales the Dews;
And mounting upwards in his heav'nly Way,
Thro' three long Hours has drove the rising Day:
If yet the Woods the dewy Drops retain,
Brush from the gather'd Leaves the pearly Rain.

Much it imports when rigid Mornings freeze
The spangled Boughs, and chill the blooming Trees;
The Leaves outspread before the Sun to lay,
'Till Colds expell'd confess the warming Ray.
But when condensing Clouds begin to low'r,
And with unerring Signs portend a Show'r,

Haste, Baskets bring, the Mulberries ascend,
 And to the distant Woods thy Servants send ;
 Without Distinction let the Virgins pull,
 What e'er they find, 'till all thy Stores be full ;
 Lest, while such Weather lasts, th' industrious Brood
 Should perish wholly thro' the want of Food.

Or if a Show'r, by sudden Tempests brought,
 Eludes thy Foresight, and escapes thy Thought ;
 To the thick Woods let lusty Swains repair,
 Shake the tall Elms, and gather Forrage there,
 Whilst a broad Basket's open Mouth receives
 (Since cruel Fate compells) the dripping Leaves :
 Lest Leanness and Decay should seize them all,
 And thy whole tender Flock by Famine fall.

But now let other Tasks thy Maids employ,
 Lest nauseous Filth the reptile Race annoy :
 Each Morning let them, with their earliest Care,
 Before the Flocks' fresh Pasture they prepare,
 The Shelves from Ordure cleanse, and thence convey
 Th' unfinish'd Feasts of the preceeding Day :
 With Wine perfum'd besprinkle and expel,
 From the purg'd Mansions, each offensive Smell.
 Mean while to better Air the Worms remove,
 Nor near the Verges suffer them to rove ;
 To the Mid-part constrain the wandring Flock,
 Nor tempt the Danger of a falling Shock.
 With Ease th' industrious Insect meets his Fate,
 One Fall decides his Life's unhappy Date.
 If any yet survives with Care survey,
 And fling, if hurt, the worthless Worm away ;

Nor

Nor the maim'd Insect place among thy Breed,
 Nor spend thy Pains an uselefs Drone to feed :
 From him no Web expect, no glossy Chain ;
 Thy Time, thy Pasture, and thy Hopes are vain :
 In Sloth he lives, and guiltless of his Part,
 With idle Wonder views his Fellow's Art.

Oft also may'st thou see th' unsated Brood
 Reject their Pasture, and decline their Food ;
 And with Lethargick Chains their Bodies bound,
 Supinely loll in Depth of Slumbers drown'd :
 Here spare thy Fears, nor fly to needlefs Aids,
 Nor Sicknefs marr's, nor Pestilence invades. (5)
 Two rolling Suns prolong the balmy Trance,
 The Work of Nature, not the Stroke of Chance ;
 But when the third assumes his radiant Bloom,
 Dispells the Night, and dissipates the Gloom ;
 Joyful they rise, to greater Strength succeed,
 And fall with more Alacrity to feed.

Observe them swoln, (nor is the Labour hard)
 Lest Sleep o'ertake them while thou'rt unprepar'd :
 They give the Signs themselves ; their Food they
 scorn,
 Aloft in Air their swelling Heads are born,
 Unwonted Silence at their Feasts prevails,
 Each Heart beats slow, and every Spirit fails.

(5) *All the other Writers upon this Subject call this a Sick-*
ness in the Worms ; but Vida's Words are,

—Hic parce metu, ne corpora morbus,
 Forte aliquis, gentemq; lues invaserit Ægram.

Not all at once the sleepy Charms invade,
Some wake, while some beneath their Force are
laid ;

Unapt, as yet, their weary Limbs to steep
In downy Trances, and extended sleep :
But in their Turn they feel the balmy Pow'r,
Receive his Blessings, and his Reign explore.

The waking Worms disparted from the rest,
Remove, for Safety, to a diff'rent Nest ;
While the same Seat contains the sleeping Crews,
Whose Age the same is, and the same their Dues ;
At once they work, at once aloft they soar,
And in new Shapes the vaulted (6) Skies explore.

But when the dewy God, with soft Surprise,
Steals o'er their Limbs, and sits upon their Eyes ;
While in his rosy Arms dissolv'd they lie,
The old withdraw, nor with fresh Leaves supply ;
For while intranc'd they seem, the drowzy Worms
Assume new Skins, and change their pristine Forms ;
In Bloom renew'd awakes the reptile Race,
New Strength improves them, and new Beauties
grace.

Thus when in rooted Earth, compell'd by Colds,
A Crowd of Serpents hide their circling Folds,

(6) *It is certain, that the Chrysalis never flies, and our Author says as much in the Second Book ; tho' there his Words are,*

—————*Supra ad convexa volantes.*

Dead

Dead-like they pass the Wintry Gloom away,
'Till softer Gales, and warmer Breezes play:
Then rising to the Sun their Trance conclude,
At once their Beauty, and their Youth renew'd.
These yearly change: But 'tis the Silk-Worm's
Doom,
Thrice in his Life from Sleep to borrow Bloom.

But now the Brood is grown to riper Age,
Their Lives advancing to the latest Stage:
Now they prepare, and now to Work incline,
When thro' their Sides the Webs pellucid shine;
New Mansions seek, th' untasted Leaves despise,
Their Heads erect, and upwards turn their Eyes:
Their lofty Seats and each contiguous Place,
In search of Twigs to work upon, they trace;
And weary of their Shelves, and fond of Change,
Hang o'er the Verge, with strong Desire to range.
Then haste, ye Maids, and for their Work provide,
Lop'd Sprays and Brushwood rang'd on ev'ry Side.
And now their ancient Seats at once they leave,
And to the slender Twigs descending cleave;
Unless the Dames, who view the strange Turmoil,
Pity their Labour, and relieve their Toil.
The oldest, and the largest then dispart,
With Care distinguish'd, and discern'd by Art;
And such, whose lab'ring Time is come, out lay
In pendant Postures on each wither'd Spray:
The rest at distance keep, 'till ev'ry Stain
For sake their Skins, and not a Spot remain.
'Till when its Course is run, the stated Time,
Their Intrails purges from all filthy Slime;

'Till

'Till sleeker Sides with brighter Gleam unfold,
The glossy Treasures, and the Threads of Gold.

As when the Vines the rip'ning Grapes display,
In Clusters purpled by the genial Ray,
By slow Degrees the mellowing Juice refines,
'Till the whole Must with Golden Tincture shines.

The Shelves forsaken, o'er the Twigs they rove,
And joyful wander thro' the mimick Grove;
There ply their Work, and with officious Strife,
Each spins his Web, the Gathering of his Life:
From Spray to Spray the flowing Threads they twine,
At once their Order, and their Art divine.
Circles are spun, and over Circles roll'd,
With varying Turns, and many a winding Fold;
Until the ambient Webs the Worms inclose,
Such Love of Glory in their Bosoms glows;
Nor cease they yet, with stronger Wishes fraught,
Imprison'd in the Mazes which they wrought,
The hollow Space with subtle Threads to fill,
But Oval frame the Work with labour'd Skill.
None idly gazes on, all seem inspired,
To work by generous Emulation fir'd;
As if expectant of some promis'd Prize,
While Day-light gilds, or Darknefs veils the Skies.
Some thou may'st view their earliest Toil begin,
Thick Webs on some, themselves unseen within;
Whilst others driving on in full Career,
Thro' thinner Shades, as thro' a Mist appear,
Obvious to Sight; while ev'ry curious Eye,
May all their Labours, all their Ways descry.

But

But some with common Care one Task provide,
 And in one Web themselves together hide.
 Some while they strive all others to excell,
 And bear away the Praise of working well,
 In the Mid-web (unhappy Reptiles) dye,
 And the long Labours interrupted lie.
 Besides when in their Balls the rest retire,
 Soon as their Work is finish'd they expire.
 All, all expire, such is the gen'ral Doom,
 And ev'ry Silk-Worm builds himself a Tomb.

Gobravely meet your Fate, the Prize obtain,
 Your Toil's not fruitless, nor your Labour vain,
 Ye noble Souls: To you new Forms are due,
 And other Bodies shall your Bloom renew;
 For pitying *Venus* will your Lives restore,
 And cloath your Souls in Shapes unknown before.

First *Venus* taught their Labours to improve,
 And from the Groves the Silk-Worms to remove;
 E'er this, an (1) Oak-born Race of naked Men
 Ran wild in Woods, or lurk'd in ev'ry Den:

(1) Oak-born.] *It was the Opinion of several of the Ancients, that the first Men sprung from the Trunks and Boughs of Oak Trees: And this our Author follows, when he says in this Place,*

Ante homines nati durum genus ilice rupta.

And in another,

—Antiquo Robore nati.

Statius, in the fourth Book of his Thebais, says thus of the Arcadians, who were by the Heathens thought the first Men,

—Nemorum vos stirpe vigenti,

Fama satos, cum prima pedum vestigia tellus,

Admirata tulit. —

And Virgil, whom our Author is every where fond of imitating, has this Verse to the same purpose,

Gensq; virum truncis & duro robore nati.

As yet no Fleece was shorn, no Flax was sown,
 Their Art unlabour'd, and their Use unknown :
 But wrap'd in Leaves of Trees, the Savage Crew
 Escap'd the Winter's Cold and Summer's Dew,
 From falling Show'rs secur'd in Wilds they lay,
 Deep Cliffs by Night, and shading Groves by Day.
 In Throngs promiscuous wander'd thro' the Glades,
 The naked Youths amidst the naked Maids ;
 'Till by degrees when Shame their Minds assail'd,
 And Modesty, unknown before, prevail'd ;
 The Skins of Beast their hairy Limbs infold,
 Prevent their Blushes, and repel the Cold ;
 And Mankind wore for Use, as now for Pride,
 The rugged Bull's, or shaggy Lion's Hide.

Ev'n Gods and Goddesses in Heav'n liv'd then,
 Naked and shameless as their Creatures Men ;
 'Till *Pallas* taught to weave the varied Piece,
 Sow the soft Flax, and crop the woolly Fleece :
 With diff'rent Dyes she made her Garments gay,
 While blended Colours in Confusion lay.
 A radiant Robe she wove, and round it drew
 A painted Border, glitt'ring to the View :
 Some Dress to ev'ry Goddess she bestow'd,
 And next, the noble Art to Mankind show'd.

Venus alone was by the Dame disdain'd,
Venus alone, uncloath'd, as yet, remain'd :
 (Her signal Beauty, and her Heav'nly Bloom,
 Were envied by the Goddesses of the Loom.)

Long

Long mock'd, she with her Sons from Heav'n re-
moves,

And lies retir'd amid th'*Idalian* Groves,
'Till Time and Fortune to her Wishes brought
The Good she long'd for, and the Gift she sought.

Thee *Philyra*, on *Pelion's* lofty Shades,
Thee first and fairest of the *Sylvan* Maids,
Ranging in Search of Herbs, the fertile Green,
Old *Saturn* saw, and lov'd as soon as seen.
How oft with Pray'rs the scornful Nymph he wooes,
With Sighs entreats her, and with Gifts pursues,
With Gifts not grateful : She contemns his Cares,
His Suit refuses, and rejects his Pray'rs.
How oft with hasty Steps in early Dawn,
Trac'd he the Virgin o'er the flowry Lawn?
Taught her what healing Plants the Fields produce,
Shew'd ev'ry Herb, its Virtue and its Use.
But all in vain these fruitless Arts he tries,
She scorns his Love, and from his Presents flies.
What could he do ? To *Venus* straight he pray'd,
Besought her Counsel, and implor'd her Aid ;
And swore, if by her Means he might succeed,
That equal to her Art should be the Meed.
The Goddess warn'd him from his whining Strain,
That Sighs, and Vows, and Gifts, would plead in
vain ;
That nought was left to make his Joys compleat,
But Force to foil, or Stratagem to cheat ;
An Horse's Form she bids the Godhead wear,
And graze the Meads frequented by the Fair ;

In such a Shape, conceal'd from Mortal's Eyes,
 Rush on the Nymph, and take her by surprize.
 Quick he obeys: His Neighing's heard around,
 And *Pelion's* Rocks return the well-feign'd Sound.
 The Plot succeeds; He by this artful Aid,
 Caught, and compress'd the much reluctant Maid.

For this, in fond Return, the God bestow'd,
 To her whose kind Advice the Method show'd,
 In softest Linnen wrap'd, the tender Seeds,
 From whence th' industrious Progeny proceeds.
 " Fairest of Goddesses these Gifts receive,
 " Hence thou may'st learn the finest Dress to weave;
 " Nor need the Flaxen or the Woolly Pride,
 " Which envious *Pallas* has to thee deny'd.
 He said, and to the joyful Dame imparts
 Their various Uses, and their secret Arts;
 Which when he fled his Son's immortal Rage,
 Nor dar'd the Thunder of his Arm engage,
 And rang'd o'er Wilds, deserted and alone,
 He first observ'd, to all before unknown.
 With Prescience big, then also he foretold,
 Of Bards to live, when distant Ages roll'd,
 Who should their wond'rous Origin display,
 While the whole World admir'd the lofty Lay.
 A Labour grateful to each *Latian* Girl,
 When thro' their Hands the twisting Threads they
 twirl.

SILK-



SILK-WORMS.

BOOK II.



NCE more thy promis'd Aid
this Labour claims,
Thou best and brightest of the
Latian Dames ;
Who stop'd the Ruin of thy
Native Soil :
Her Danger pity'd, and re-
liev'd her Toil.

Thy happy Womb the Blessing has insur'd,
Which by thy noble Offspring stands secur'd ;
Whose Deeds thou joyful shalt behold excell
What Gods have acted, or what Poets tell.
See what vast Strength the youthful (1) *Fed'rick*
shows,
What noble Ardour in his Bosom glows.

(1) *Fed'rick* : Son to the then Duke of Mantua.

Mark his Majestick Grace: In him conspire
 The Mother's Sweetness, and the Father's Fire:
 In him their Charms with equal Force surprize;
 The Cheeks vermillion'd, and the spark'ling Eyes;
 Already War he loves, and dire Alarms,
 Mounts the fierce Horse, and swells to be in Arms.
 Him *Asia* fears, by sure Prefages led,
 And Eastern Realms their future Victor dread;
 'The Soils that (2) *Ganges* bounds, and *Tigris* laves,
 And where (3) *Hydaspes* rolls his foaming Waves.
 Struck with his heav'nly Bloom, and manly Grace,
 And all the varying Wonders of his Face:
 For him shall Eastern Dames desponding sigh,
 For him shall tremble when the Danger's nigh;
 For him, dispensing Fate amidst his Foes,
 Where swift (4) *Euphrates* thro' the Valleys flows.
 What anxious Joy will his Return bestow?
 And with what doubtful Rapture wilt thou glow?
 To hear of Mosques eraz'd, their Kings dethron'd,
 And Ghosts of (5) *Grecian* Ancestors atton'd.
 Then on thy (6) *Mincio's* Banks new Bards shall rise,
 Sing his great Acts, and raise him to the Skies.
 For me the Silken Arts again incite,
 Once more the *Seriads* to the Task invite;

(1) *The Soils which Ganges bounds, and Tigris laves.] India and Persia, thro' which these Rivers run, as he describes.*

(2) *Hydaspes, a River of Armenia.*

(3) *Euphrates, a River of Assyria, that runs through Babylon.*

(4) *Grecian Ancestors.] The Turks had subdued all Greece many Years before the Writing of this Poem.*

(5) *Mincio's Banks.] The River Mancio flows through Mantua.*

To

To the cool Shades *Thebean* Trees display,
My Steps they beckon, and direct my Way;
And while beneath the Branches I recline,
Around my Brows the grateful Foliage twine:
Since the proud Laurel must not grace my Head,
Nor winding Ivy round my Temples spread.

When o'er the branchy Twigs the Worms are laid,
And vomit from their Mouths the glossy Thread;
Your Help they need not, nor your Care demand,
While thrice three Suns the rosy Morn expand.

Learn thou, mean-while, thy languid Flocks to
cure,
To shield from Sickneſs, and from Harm ſecure:
For you, ye little Race, th' impartial Pow'rs
Subject to Chances, and to Pains like ours:
Misfortunes ſhock you, and Diſorders maim,
And dire Diſeaſes rack your tender Frame.

Whether the Peſt proceeds thro' Want of Care,
From Food infected, or from noxious Air;
Thro' the whole Flock the dread Contagion flies,
And in one Ruin all the Nation lies.
Strait Death enſues: Their Corſe the Shelves be-
ſtrow,
While from each Carcaſs putrid Liquor's flow;
All, all are loſt, with them your Hopes are dead,
Of promis'd Lucre, and of ſilken Thread.
Ye Pow'rs Divine, ſuch dreadful Dangers ward,
Our tender Flocks from dire Diſaſters guard!

Since

Since friendly Nature can't the Means afford,
 Nor has Man's active Industry explor'd
 The Spring of all Diseases to expound,
 Nor Herbs to heal them, if they could be found.
 Yet many Methods, by Experience shown ;
 Or else by others taught, I'll now make known.

The dead ones from the living to dispart,
 Is the first Precept in the Healing Art ;
 Left by their Means th' Infection should proceed,
 And Death and Ruin run thro' all the Breed.

Of like Importance, is the strictest Care,
 To shun Contagion from corrupted Air:
 When the warm Sun exhales the lightly Dew,
 And lucid Clouds are ting'd with Azure Hue;
 When Storms are hush'd, and all the Sky serene,
 And not one Blast disturbs the solemn Scene ;
 Much it avails the Windows to unfold,
 And breathe the Nurslings with a gentle Cold.
 To let pure Air, and Light benign appear,
 Air to refresh the Worms, and Light to chear :
 The fresher Blast the nauseous Fog dispels,
 Brushes the Seats, and drives th' offensive Smells :
 And varying still, in wholesome Breezes, strays,
 Sweeps thro' the Shelves, and round the Silk-Worms
 plays :
 Which while unchang'd it stood, corrupt they drew,
 Whence various Dangers to their Lives ensue.

Thus

Thus in the Wells, if stagnant Water lies,
Nor oft' remov'd, makes Room for new Supplies;
Its Virtue, and its Use are soon debas'd,
Harsh to the Smell, and bitter to the Taste.

Now round the Seats your Flocks delighted stray,
Bask in the Gleam, and in the Sun-shine play;
Yet 'tis unsafe beneath the Beams to lie,
But view their Lustre thro' the distant Sky.

But if raw Colds th' unwholsome Season chill,
Or falling Show'rs from Win'try Clouds distill;
Much Good will it procure to let respire
Within the damping Dome a gentle Fire.
Yet lest the Smoke thy Nurslings should annoy,
Large Stoves prepare, and hollow Vaults employ:
Whence, by no Passage led, the dusky Fume
In curling Mists obscures the darken'd Room;
But outward to the Skies its Vapour spreads,
While gentle Warmth glows inward on the Beds.

Some when the Trees adorn'd with Fruit they
view,
And rip'ning Berries, ting'd with Purple Hue,
In thin-wrought Nets the chosen Food dispose;
Or else in perforated Skins enclose:
Then high in Air the bulky Ball they throw,
And tofs the flying Bundle to and fro;
Thro' the wide Holes the falling Berries fly,
Like Hailstones rattling thro' the low'ring Sky;

While ev'ry uselefs Part the Motion drains,
 And nought but pureft Pasturage remains.
 And this they do, because the Fruit is said
 To purge the Worms, and dire Diseases spread.

Besides, if sprinkled Oil the Worms bedews,
 Life shuns the Touch, and sudden Death ensues :
 Be careful then, ye Maids, by Night, when you
 The Seats revisit, and the Flocks review ;
 Far from the Shelves the gleaming Lamp to lay,
 Where burning Oil supports the feeble Ray ;
 Left by some Chance the slightest Drop may fall,
 And in a dreadful Pest involve them all.
 So far the Spleen can reach, which long before
 The Olive's (7) Patron to Love's Goddess bore.

Whatever Moisture taints the Reptile Brood,
 (But chief where Particles of Salt are strew'd)
 With the first Touch communicates the Bane,
 Vain is all Art, and ev'ry Hope is vain ;
 Their shining Skins with sudden Lustre glow,
 Their Bodies swelling, and their Motion flow ;
 With stupid Drowziness they seem accurst,
 Faint, and more faint they grow, until they burst ;
 The baneful Pest to all around dispose,
 While from each Part the putrid Matter flows ;
 Nor ought avails it, to th' infected Crew
 That from Salt Seas her Birth fair *Venus* drew.

(7) *The Olive's Patron.] Pallas.*

Some

Some Beldames have been found, by Envy fir'd,
By Malice prompted, or by Hell inspir'd,
With saltish Dew the growing Leaves to stain,
(Ye Pow'rs Divine such horrid Crimes restrain !)
So, while on Food the hidden Venom lies,
The Worm, unknowing, sucks his Bane, and dies.
Some therefore watch the Woods with strictest Care,
Nor Night nor Day the Guards are wanting there.

Far distant from your Flock be ev'ry Noise,
Th' obstreperous Clamours of exulting Boys,
The Winding Horn, the Trumpet's Martial Sound,
And hollow ratt'ling Drum, with Voice profound.
Oft' have the Nurlings, in their sickly State,
Stunn'd with much fainter Murmurs met their Fate.

Nor thro' their Houses let the Children stray,
Nor near the Shelves the young Destroyers play;
Slaughter attends their Walks, their Touches Pain;
With frequent Hand'ling all the Brood are slain.
Restrain with Care their mischievous Delight,
With Words amuse them, and with Tales affright;
Depaint the Silk-Worms, darting present Death,
Stings in their Tails, and Poison in their Breath;
Describe them Monsters, give them Serpents Names,
And all the horrid Forms thy Fancy frames.

Beware likewise, that none shall view thy Breed,
Lest their whole Ruin should from thence proceed;
Upon whose Breath the Taint of Garlick dwells,
Or Leeks or Onions more detested smells.

Oft' have I seen a Silk-Worm gasp in Death,
 Touch'd lightly by a Maid's ill-scented Breath;
 Up thro' the Nose its Force the Blast conveys,
 Till on the Heart the subtle Poyson preys.

Nor let all enter who thy Flocks would see,
 Nor be to ev'ry Wight the Passage free;
 Examine strictly e'er thou let'st them in,
 Their Breath, their Looks, their Voice, their Eyes,
 their Mein:

All wrinkled Hags, without Distinction, drive
 Far from your Silk-Worms, if you wish them
 thrive;

They'll blast your Labours, and your Hopes beguile,
 With Looks malignant, and Enchantments vile.
 Let gentle Youths and beauteous Maids alone,
 To whose gay Bloom such Mischiefs are unknown,
 Be suffer'd in: There lead the sprightly Dance,
 Retire alternate, and by Turns advance;
 Or Hymns to *Venus*, and to *Saturn* sing,
 While with alternate Strains the Valleys ring.

I well remember, on the Hill that lies,
 Where proud *Viterbo's* Tow'rs invade the Skies,
 An antient Man I saw, of Aspect base,
 Grim was his Look, and rueful was his Face;
 His matted Hair in bristled Order stood,
 And his foul Eyes were strain'd with Streaks of
 Blood:

He with a Look would kill whate'er occur'd,
 The reptile Insect, or the flying Bird;

Through

Through Gardens if he chanc'd his Steps to steer,
When rosy Spring renew'd the beauteous Year,
When blowing Flow'rs perfum'd the balmy Breeze,
And op'ning Blossoms whiten'd all the Trees;
The blooming Trees perceiv'd a sudden Blight,
And with'ring Flow'rs confess'd his baneful Sight;
The Blossoms fell where-e'er his Eyes he turn'd,
And all their blasted Hopes the Gard'ners mourn'd.
Not e'en fierce *Boreas*, on his blust'ring Wing,
To ill-fenc'd Orchards could such Ruin bring.

If near my House such Vengeance hap' to stray,
Or by my Gates hereafter take his Way,
When Flocks of Worms possess their soft Retreats,
Or labour cheerful in their easy Seats;
Let not one Maid his wand'ring Course delay,
Or speak him welcome, or desire his Stay,
But ev'ry Window close, bar ev'ry Door,
Nor let his baneful Eyes their Poison pour,

At length arrives the long-expected Day,
And cheers your Heart with its auspicious Ray:
Now enter, and behold their Tasks entire,
Their Arts contemplate, and all their Works admire;
Mark ev'ry Spray, with pendant Balls bespread,
With pendant Balls of glossy varying Thread.
Like Orchards deck'd in their Autumnal Pride,
With many-colour'd Fruits diversify'd,
Each Twig adorn'd with glossy Bottoms lies,
Of diff'rent Sizes, and of diff'rent Dyes:
Some from their Artists Food assume the Green,
And some with amber-colour'd Threads are seen;
Others

Others with golden Tincture please the View,
The rest conspicuous for the whitest Hue.

With watchful Ear the pendant Balls explore,
If the clos'd Worms have giv'n their Labours o'er;
And if no Sound is heard, no Force express'd,
But hush'd in Silence all their Murmurs rest,
Without Delay despoil their high Abodes,
And strip the Branches of their shining Loads.
With Ardour pluck them; hasten all your Maids
To bring large Baskets, and to lend their Aids.

Then from the Balls, all uselefs Threads divide,
Coarse flazy Locks that hang on ev'ry Side;
All these the Country Damsel spins like Tow,
While twisting Threads between her Fingers flow:
In Garments fram'd of these, her self arrays
On sacred Seasons, and rejoicing Days;
When she with modest Pride allures the Swains,
Or trips in Gambols o'er the flow'ry Plains.

Next of the Stock three Dividends be made,
The best and finest on Heav'n's Altars laid;
Some for Continuance of th' industrious Breed,
That a new Race of Spinsters might succeed:
The rest for Cloaths, and ev'ry various Use,
That Art can frame, or Luxury produce.

Of the whole Stock, the fittest you can find,
Chuse for Preservance of the short-liv'd Kind;
One Year's Neglect impairs the weaken'd Strain,
The Race degenerates, and feels a Wane;

From

From Breed to Breed sink downwards as they go,
And worse and worse by Time the Reptiles grow :
Yet for the Seed few Bottoms will suffice,
Since from each chosen Ball whole Flocks arise ;
A numerous Issue from one Dam accrues,
Who with an hundred Eggs the Race renews.

What you provide, connect, and on one String
In pendant Clusters let the Bottoms cling ;
But be thou watchful, while thro' those you chuse,
The Needle pierces, and the Thread pursues,
Gently to bore, and carefully to strive
Thro' the extreamest Parts the Steel to drive :
Lest the clos'd Carcasses should be annoy'd,
Thy Hopes o'erthrown, and all the Race destroy'd.

When thus connected, seek the coldest Place,
There lay the Breeders of the Reptile Race :
Or in some Vault, where mellowing Wine grows old,
Check'd and improv'd by Subterranean Cold ;
Or where high hollow Rocks exclude the Day,
From Caves impervious to the piercing Ray :
There let them lie hid in the dusky Gloom,
Lest too much Heat the Skeletons consume ;
Whom kinder Fate will with new Life supply,
And change each wond'ring Reptile to a Fly ;
E'er Morning ushers in the rising Sun,
When twice five Times his daily Course is run.

When *Venus* first (as oft' I've heard it told)
The Reptile Artists fed in Days of old,

In *Ida's* Vale, beneath the leafy Shade,
 A Crowd of naked Loves around her play'd:
 The wond'ring Gods the pleasing Work would shate,
 And gently stroak'd and handled them with Care;
 Or with full Hands th' industrious Insects fed,
 Or blooming Flow'rs around their Mansions spread,
 Or careless wander'd thro' the mimick Forts,
 And with fond Ease indulg'd their idle Sports.

Abroad, by Chance, the wand'ring Mother stray'd,
 While thro' the Dome the little Triflers play'd;
 Amidst the Seats in mingling Crowds they flock,
 And rush against them with a dreadful Shock:
 Sudden the crack'ling Shelves disjointed fall,
 And one disastrous Fate o'erturns them all;
 The murder'd Worms lie gasping all around,
 And Heaps of Slain bestrow th' ensanguin'd Ground.

This Slaughter, when the Dame returning view'd,
 And saw from far the Seats with Blood imbru'd,
 Her Flocks extinguish'd, and the Race destroy'd,
 And Death with universal Ruin cloy'd:
 She sought her Sons, and Servants all around;
 Her Sons, and Servants, no where could be found;
 For, conscious of their Crime, with secret Dread,
 In Caves they lurk, or to the Wilds they fled:
 Pierc'd with a pungent Grief the Goddess stood,
 Tears fill'd her Eyes, and Sorrow thrill'd her Blood.
 Now wild with Rage from Place to Place she flies,
 And fills th'*Idalian* Eccho's with her Cries.
 And as thro' lonely Fields she weeping runs,
 Demands of them her Servants, and her Sons;

Nor

Nor Night nor Day she ceases to complain,
And restless roams, and wails, but all in vain.

Chearless, at length, she takes her mournful Way,
To dreary Seats, and Regions, void of Day,
Where awful *Pluto* keeps his gloomy Court,
Where, after Death, the Souls of Men resort,
Where Shades unbody'd, of the Finny Race,
And Beasts, and Birds, and Insects, throng the
Space :

Resolv'd her rigid Uncle's Leave t' obtain,
That some few should return to Life again ;
From whom a Flock of Silk-Worms might succeed,
The Race replenish, and renew the Breed.

Their little Ghosts, as yet unwafted o'er,
Stray'd on the Banks, and hover'd round the Shore,
Where no kind Light diffuses golden Gleams,
Or *Styx's* horrid Lake, and pitchy Streams.
Now their approaching Queen the Spectres knew,
Advanc'd, and joyful to her Bosom flew,
And clap'd their little Wings, and flutter'd round,
The Goddess own'd, and joy'd to see them found.

But when the *Stygian* King the Dame perceives,
With all Respect her Visit he receives ;
Her Suit allows, nor lets her beg in vain,
That some might be restor'd to Life again ;
From whom a Set of Artists might succeed,
The Race replenish, and renew the Breed ;
And their new Bodies with two Wings supplies,
To help their Passage upwards to the Skies.

Yet on these Terms, that yearly all the Kind,
Their Labours finish'd, and their Tasks entwin'd,
The Form and Features of a Moth assume,
And take two Journeys to th' infernal Gloom.

As Fame reports, *Pallene's* Northern Coast
Contains a People, who this Wonder boast ;
Who, if nine Times they plunge in *Triton's* Lake,
Beneath the Waves their human Forms forsake ;
Chang'd into feather'd Shapes aloft they fly,
And cut with new-born Wings the yielding Sky.

Behold, what Force, what Ardour they display,
Thro' the surrounding Web to force their Way ;
The close-wrought Ball resists them, and confines,
With harden'd Windings, of unnumber'd Lines.
Ceaseless they toil, and ev'ry Part explore,
And trace their darksom Prison o'er and o'er,
For some weak Place, which open they might lay,
And force a Passage to the Sight of Day.
Bor'd with his Beak, at length a Road is found,
And the glad Pris'ner issues at the Wound,
When (strange to Sight, and monstrous to be told)
Chang'd to a Fly the Silk-Worm you behold ;
What long, and reptile was, now wing'd arise,
And a new Species offer to your Eyes :
A Moth appears to your admiring View,
In Feature diff'rent, but the same in Hue.

The Passage open'd to the chearing Light,
From their dark Cells, and Caverns wrap'd in Night ;
With

With Wonder struck, the metamorphos'd Band,
In wild Amaze, and deep Confusion, stand:
Nor trust themselves in Air, nor dare to ply
The Steerage of their Wings, and cleave the Sky:
Unlike their old, their present Forms admire,
Nor know their Features in this strange Attire;
Their Horns and Wings, with Wonder they survey,
Nor ought beyond their former Strength essay;
Conscious and doubtful of their antient Kind;
Nor seek the Foliage for their Food assign'd.
So firmly fix'd remain the Thoughts of Death,
And dread Remembrance of the Gloom beneath,
Ev'n now the dismal Scenes of Hell arise
In fancy'd Shapes, and skim before their Eyes,
The pitchy Torrent, and the shatter'd Boat,
'The Monster barking from his three-fold Throat,
In sundry horrid Forms their Souls annoy,
And turn their Senses from all worldly Joy.

Nor drink, nor Forage for the Flies prepare,
Vain is thy Food, and vainer is thy Care;
But from the Thread with gentlest Hand convey,
And on the Shelves the sluggish Insects lay;
When o'er the Board, with cautious Art, is drawn
A thin soft Cov'ring of the finest Lawn.
For when they find Death must again ensue,
Through Want of Pasture, to their Hunger due,
Seiz'd all at once with Horror and Dismay,
They labour to avoid the dreadful Day;
Such is their Horror, and so great their Fear,
As if the Day of final Doom was near;

When Heav'n and Earth, the Ocean and the Sky,
 Shall in one ruinous Confusion lie ;
 When all Things mortal shall from Life be hurl'd,
 And from its crackling Frame the long-fix'd World.
 With strong Desire all to Coition fly,
 That with new Seeds the Nation may supply ;
 And when their slender Forms shall be no more,
 The Kind continue, and the Race restore.

Unlike the Birds, and Beasts, of Sylvan Kind,
 In various Couplings they no Rapture find ;
 A settled Rule their certain Bliss improves,
 With chosen Nuptials, and elected Loves ;
 Each clasping each, the Females and the Males,
 In strict Embraces by th' entwining Tails,
 Eager they press, and with exulting Wings,
 While each to each, as join'd with Rivets, clings :
 Nor is the Rapture short, oft' are they found
 Four tedious Days in mutual Twinings bound ;
 Nor leave their Loves, nor quit their tender Holds,
 Till cruel Death dissolves the circling Folds :
 Nor if, through wasteful Bliss, his Spirits fail,
 And earlier Fate arrests th' exhausted Male,
 The Female long survives, she seems forlorn,
 Nor will be yet from his Embraces torn ;
 Preparing for his Fate, she fondly lies,
 And lays her Eggs without Delay, and dies.

Thus are the Lives of all the Flock resign'd ;
 With equal Fate thus perish all the Kind ;
 And, pitying, thou may'st view the genial Bed,
 With Carnage heap'd, and loaded with the Dead :

Then

Then bring them forth; their Exequies attend;
For all their Toils, and Lives, are at an end.

But gather up with Care what Seeds remain,
Like Grains of Millet scatter'd o'er the Plain;
From these expect a certain Breed redound,
E'er the revolving Year has fill'd his Round;
From these an annual Offspring is renew'd,
And a young Race repairs the short-liv'd Brood.
For these a Place provide from Sight obscur'd,
From Summer's Heat, and Winter's Cold secur'd;
Thy Labours, Both contribute to destroy,
And Both with equal Force thy Seeds annoy:
Benumbing Frost the vital Ardour chills,
Expels the Warmth, and unborn Insects kills;
And Heat admitted, with its tepid Ray,
Brings them too early to the Sight of Day;
When not a Leaf adorns the hoary Woods,
And frozen Fetters bind the rapid Floods;
When Winter's Rage broods dreadful o'er thy Farms,
And Mulberries protend their naked Arms.

If all thy forward Hopes of Breed are crost,
And all thy Seed is by Heav'n's Anger lost,
A slaughter'd Calf the Reptile Kind repairs,
As ruin'd (1) Beehives are supply'd with Heirs;
But with this Diff'rence still: Before he bleeds,
Till in its Course the twentieth Day succeeds,

(1) *Beehives,*] &c. Bees are bred from the putrified Bowels of a Calf. See the fourth Georgic of Virgil, where Aristæus, having lost his whole Stock, is by his Mother set upon that Expedient.

Permit no limpid Stream, nor Grass, nor Hay,
 Abate his Hunger, or his Thirst allay :
 But stabled close, be Mulberries his Feast,
 The blooming Leaves, and Bark of milky Taste.
 His Intrails putrify'd ; in thick Array
 Up through his broken Ribs shall force their Way
 Whole Swarms of Worms ; and, to thy wond'ring
 Eyes,
 Like Mushrooms sprouting through his Back shall
 rise.

What yet remains untaught, is constant Care
 Fresh Seed for ev'ry Season to prepare ;
 For if beyond one Year unus'd it lies,
 Its Strength abates, and all its Vigour dies.

And now thy chearful Maids, with eager Joy,
 The various Workings of the Silk employ ;
 A ling'ring Labour, and unfinish'd lies,
 Till Spring with Leaves the Mulberries supplies.

When first advancing on the tedious Toil,
 In brazen Pots the glossy Balls they boil ;
 They pick their Ends, along the Water spread,
 And thro' the Steam unwind the smoaking Thread.

Next, more than once, the flazy Fleeces feel
 The labour'd Torture of the rolling Wheel ;
 Clear'd from its Knots, by Hands of skilful Girls,
 While the stretch'd Silk the circling Spindle
 twirls.

Now

Now the last Labour claims the nicest Hands,
(To weave the Piece) and all their Art demands;
Thro' the close Reed the glossy Warp is led,
By num'rous Chinks, admitting ev'ry Thread;
The op'ning Web, the gliding Woof receives,
Which, justly mingled, to the Texture cleaves:
From Hand to Hand the sounding Shuttle flies,
And equal Motion ev'ry Foot supplies;
While from above, the Wheel, with rapid Round,
Proclaims the Work, and sends an humming Sound.

With ceaseless Toils their Tasks the Virgins ply,
And strive in haste each other to outvie;
A tuneful Song, or Tale of am'rous Wiles,
Their Labour softens, and their Time beguiles.

To no one Method is the Loom confin'd,
But fills the World with Webs of various Kind:
One sort so smooth, its Surface seems to smile;
Another glitters with a glossy Pile:
On some the skilful Maids have interwove
The flow'ry Garland, and the verdant Grove;
Herbage and Fruit in blended Colours lie,
And Goats and Satyrs thro' the Texture fly.
With other Webs, like Clouds of thinner Air,
That in the Temples veil the kneeling Fair,
With which their Heads the modest Matrons grace,
And blushing Maids enwrap their glowing Face.
I saw, besides, a Silk of varying dye,
That ever and anon, would cheat the Eye;

A Gloss of diff'rent Hue, by Turns display,
While transient Colours chang'd with ev'ry Ray.

What need I more the shining Theme pursue,
The Skill of Man has nothing left to do;
Stiff golden Films the subtle Threads inclose,
And with the glitt'ring Woof the Vestment glows.
With such the Ram was deck'd in Days of old;
Such were the curling Locks that flam'd with Gold;
So gleam'd his Back with such refulgent Hue,
And from his Breast such pensile Mettal grew:
And doubt the Dames in ev'ry Place to sow
The Mulberries, and teach them how to grow?
Or for the Worms to frame the genial Nests,
Between the Pillows of their downy Breasts?
What Wonder then that o'er all Nations spread
The Reptile Artists spin the glossy Thread?
The precious Gift to all the World is known,
Nor are the *Serians* taught its Use alone,
By *Saturn's* Present to the *Cyprian* Dame,
To *Ida's* and *Citheron's* Tops it came;
In Length of Time it reach'd our happy Coast,
And *Latian* Plains the wond'rous Blessing boast.

For, heretofore (but Years obscure his Fame)
Serius, who from his Country took his Name,
In Wealth and Peace the *Serian* Sceptre sway'd,
And all the Land his high Behests obey'd:
By ardent Love of *Phaetusa* led,
In her Pursuit his Eastern Realms he fled,
And sought our *Latian* Strand: When he had heard
That to her Country she her Grief prefer'd,
Upon

Upon the Banks of *Po* her Brother wept,
 And, for his Fate, a solemn Sorrow kept:
 With ever-streaming Tears *Jove's* Wrath she
 mourn'd;
 The vengeful Bolt, and Chariot overturn'd.

He scarcely on th' *Ausonian* Shore appears,
 When a new Rumour fills his wond'ring Ears;
 That in a Tree the Maid has lost her Kind,
 Her Bosom bounded by a sudden Rind,
 Her Form perverted, and, instead of Hands,
 To rig'rous Heav'n her leafy Boughs expands.
 Struck with the News, the Prince, with mournful
 Air,

Confess'd the Symptoms of a strong Despair;
 And from his Breast the filken Garments tore;
 The shining Garments, all embroider'd o'er:
 Then on the Bank, beside the Virgin, laid,
 Embrac'd her Trunk, and wept beneath her Shade;
 Each senseless Bough, with countless Kisses, marks,
 And with his Tears bedews th' enclosing Barks;
 With ceaseless Grief bemoans his darling Fair,
 And with his frantick Wailings fills the Air.
 Now of his antient Realms, regardless grown,
 His Heaps of Treasure, and his native Crown;
 To Eastern Climes resolves not to return,
 But in *Hesperian* Fields for ever mourn.
 In the fam'd Regions, near the Banks of *Po*,
 He wastes his Life, while Tears incessant flow;
 For twelve long Months he makes perpetual Moan;
 And roams the Meadows, cheerless and alone.

At length, a last Request he faintly made,
 (The Pow'rs gave Ear, and granted what he pray'd,)
 That his Eyes' Fountains never may be dry,
 But with eternal Streams his Grief supply;
 Still he goes on, and fills with Cries the Woods,
 His Eyes supply'd with ever-streaming Floods;
 Dissolv'd in Tears his wasting Limbs decay,
 And the whole Man in Water melts away:
 A River now become, but short his Course,
 To *Addua's* Current gives a greater Force,
 (Whence, in a single Torrent join'd, they flow,
 And pour their mingled Streams into the *Po*,)
 Rolls thro' *Cremona's* Fields with Corn replete,
 And laves his much-lov'd *Phaetusa's* Feet.
 His antient Flame the River yet retains,
 Sighs for the Fair, and feels his former Pains;
 Tho' shut within a Tree, by pow'ful Charms,
 Attempts to draw the Virgin to his Arms.

The Nymph, at length, was to her Kind restor'd,
 And the fond God no more her Change deplor'd;
 But firmly join'd in hallow'd Nuptials, led
 The blushing *Dryad* to his watry Bed;
 Embroider'd Vestments to his Bride bestow'd,
 And Mantles, that with vary'd Paintings glow'd;
 The glossy Product of the Silk-Worms Wombs,
 His People's Gift, and wrought in Eastern Looms:
 To these he join'd small Parcels of their Seed,
 And show'd the Guidance of th' industrious Breed.

She long from thence to him the *Seriads* bore,
 And call'd them from the Name their Father wore;
 Who

Who taught by her the Secrets of this Art,
To all the *Latian* Towns the Gift impart ;
The Mulberries they plant in ev'ry Glade,
And with their Branches form a pleasing Shade ;
Whence Bards have sought a Crown for Song re-
nown'd,
And to their Loves the grateful Virgins bound.

F I N I S.



SILK-WORMS.

Who taught by her the Secrets of this Art,
 To all the Lanes Towns the Gift impart;
 The Mulberries they plant in every Glade,
 And with their Branches form a pleasing Shade;
 Whence Birds have taught a Crown for Song re-
 nownd,
 And to their Loves the gentle Virgins bownd.

F I W I S.



